

U.S. Capitol Press Conference Draws National Attention to Arizona Crisis

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Washington, DC) – *U.S. Representative Luis V. Gutierrez (D-IL), was joined by Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ) at a press conference on the U.S. Capitol grounds to denounce the Arizona state legislative measure (SB 1070) headed to Gov. Brewer's desk this week for signature or veto. The measure would subject everyone in the state of Arizona to arrest and booking on misdemeanor criminal trespassing charges and possible deportation if they are suspected of being an undocumented immigrant. While the proposed bill will have a devastating impact on immigrant communities in the state, the broad scope of the bill threatens the civil rights of all citizens, legal residents, tourists, and foreign visitors to the state. The following is a statement from Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez.*

The Governor should veto the bill and if she doesn't, the President should assert the federal governments' preeminent role in regulating and enforcing our nation's immigration laws.

The lunacy of rounding up people because they look a certain way or are suspected of being in violation of immigration statutes can only lead to one thing: profiling. I am Puerto Rican, I was born in Chicago, and my family has been U.S. citizens for generations, but look at my face, listen to my voice: I could get picked up. Is this what we want in America?

The police departments in Arizona raising concerns about the burden this puts on their law enforcement work are right. The Governor should listen to them. The civil rights groups who see a wide open door to civil rights violations and profiling are right and the Governor should listen to them. The business groups who worry that shoppers from Mexico and tourists from around

the world will be hesitant to spend their money in a state where looking foreign can get you questioned and arrested, and they are right and the Governor should listen to them and veto this bill.

But in the end, it all comes back to the President and whether he will put his back into the push for comprehensive immigration reform. It is critically important from a moral point of view to defend immigrants, keep their families together, and give them a place at the table if they are willing to come forward and earn it. The economy requires that we address immigration and the dysfunction of our legal immigration system and the legal status of undocumented immigrants.

The political imperative could not be more clear. A headline today (in [The Hill](#)) said I would encourage Latino voters not to vote for Democrats if the President and Congress fail to enact immigration reform and I want to say I don't think that is what I said. What I did say is that Latino and immigrant voters are likely to stay home if their options are a Republican Party actively pushing them away and Democratic Party doing little or nothing to draw them in. They don't need me to tell them to stay home and I haven't, but the very real problem exists for the President and my Party that Latino and immigrant voters remember the promises they heard and are tuned-in enough to see they haven't been kept.

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